

K-570

1935

Kentmore Park Country Store

Near Locust Grove

Private

Built by contractor Edward Vansant for Roy C. Mitchell to serve Kentmore Park, Kent County's first planned waterfront community that was begun in 1929, the Kentmore Park Store is the county's only old general store with a resort-style, rustic flavor, even though the details that make it such are only grafted on to an essentially simple 2-story, frame building with gable-front entry facing the public road. Similar basic buildings, three bays wide across the gable end, have had a long tradition in Kent County. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century survivors are seen in Galena, Georgetown, Locust Grove and Millington. A weatherboarded box with a very shallow gable roof, the store's "Mediterranean," resort-like character was achieved through the low-pitched hipped eaves that overhang all four sides about four feet, are supported by simple ^{but} ~~by~~ large exposed brackets, and are covered with metal roofing that imitates Spanish tile. The second storey was intended for apartments. A circa 1963 one-storey community recreation building was added to the south side. Standing on the west side of Rt. 444 at the original entry to Kentmore Park, the store boldly announces the carefree character of the vacation-home community that lies ahead.

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Kentmore Park Store

and/or common Kentmore Park Country Store

2. Location

street & number West side Rt. 444 (Shrewsberry Neck Rd.) 2-1/2 miles north
of Route 213, northwest of Locust Grove not for publication

city, town Locust Grove X vicinity of congressional district

state county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u> </u> district	<u> </u> public	<u> X </u> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture	<u> </u> museum
<u> X </u> building(s)	<u> X </u> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> X </u> commercial	<u> </u> park
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational	<u> X </u> private residence
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment	<u> </u> religious
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u> X </u> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government	<u> </u> scientific
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial	<u> </u> transportation
	<u> X </u> not applicable	<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military	<u> </u> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mr. & Mrs. Edward Collins

street & number R.D. #1, Box 150 telephone no.: 348-5656 (store)

city, town Kennedyville state and zip code MD 21645

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber EHP 96

street & number Cross Street folio 150

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. K-570

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Kentmore Park Country Store, on the west side of Rt. 444 (Shrewsbury Neck Road), stands at the entry to the planned waterfront community of Kentmore Park. The two-storey, frame main section of the store was built in 1935 by contractor Edward Vansant for Roy C. Mitchell, the owner of the three farms from which Kentmore Park was created and the long-time operator of the store. A simple, weatherboarded rectangular box with a very shallow gable roof, the store's "Mediterranean," resort-like character was achieved through the low pitched hipped eaves that overhang all four sides about four feet, are supported by simple but large exposed brackets, and are covered with metal roofing that imitates Spanish tiles. The main, gable roof is barely visible. The main entry is recessed between two large two-part display windows on the west gable end, facing the road; the first storey of entry end is spanned by a shed-roofed, three-bay porch with the same roof "tiles" as the eaves. The store was built with three apartments on the second storey. They were entered from the east end (rear) of the building, through a central second-storey hall. There are now two apartments, one occupied by the owners-shopkeepers. Another exterior stair has been added for second-storey access, on the north side. In the early 1960s a large one-storey concrete block and frame recreation building with gable roof was added along the store's south side; it has a slightly later rear addition. Gas pumps stand in the paved front parking area.

The main section measures approximately 24' wide x 54' deep. On the west gable end, above the main store entry, there are three evenly-spaced double-hung windows with 1-over-1 lights. The rear second-storey is also three bays wide, the center one an entry. An exterior quarter-turn stair leads to a second-story deck with access to this residential entry.

The north side of the second storey is six bays deep. The side second-storey 1-over-1 windows were originally mostly paired. Those in the rear-most three bays of the north side are original, but those in the front-most two bays have been replaced with large, single-light, fixed glass "picture" windows. Adjacent in the third bay, replacing a window, is now a second-story entry door, reached by a simple wooden straight-run exterior stair and top landing. On the first storey, the first four side windows from the front were three-light awning windows, set high in the wall to light the store without consuming wall display space. These remain on the north side, but on the south side two were removed when the recreation building was added and the other two were covered on the store side. Three doors and an original double-hung window complete the last four bays of the north side. Original window trim is 4-1/2" wide and plain.

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8. Significance

Survey No. K-570

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1935

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Kentmore Park Country Store is Kent County's only store with a resort-style, rustic flavor, even though the details that make it such are only grafted on to an essentially simple two-storey, frame building with gable-front entry facing the public road. Such buildings, usually three bays wide across the gable end, have had a long tradition in Kent County. Nineteenth-century survivors are seen in Galena, Georgetown, Locust Grove, and Millington. The local vernacular form of store buildings seems to have had a strong influence on the local contractor and original owner, though they also desired something different and appropriate for a vacation community. Though built several years after the beginning of Kentmore Park, the county's first planned waterfront community, it is a key building there, because of its size, its location at the entry to the community, and its specialized purpose.

Until the development of Kentmore Park began in 1929, on the eve of the Great Depression of the 1930's, Shrewsbury Neck had been agricultural. Buckingham (1,000 acres) was laid out in 1658 for Richard Turner in the upper and upper-western part of the neck but soon was repatented to Richard Bennett. Somewhere on Shrewsbury Neck, perhaps in the area developed as Kentmore Park, an early but unenduring town called Shrewsbury Town was laid out. Supposedly located at Meeting House Point (whose location is uncertain), it probably contained the predecessor to Shrewsbury Church. Until the mid-eighteenth century this tract and some adjacent ones as well (totaling 1,733 acres) were called Bennett's Regulation, owned by Richard Bennett, III. The Lloyds of Wye, another wealthy absentee landowning family, next acquired the 1,733 acres; before the Revolution it was acquired by the Revolutionary hero General John Cadwalader (d.1786), who married a Lloyd daughter. Called Shrewsbury Farm by Cadwalader, who was the first of the owners actually to live on Shrewsbury Neck, the farm grew through several relatively small purchases. When his estate was finally settled in the early nineteenth century, most of Shrewsbury Farm (1470.5 acres) was sold to brothers Peregrine and Samuel Wethered. Only in the mid-nineteenth century was the land broken into the smaller tracts that endured, largely unchanged into the twentieth.

(CONTINUED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-570

Kentmore Park sales prospectus, no date. In possession of R. Clayton Mitchell Jr., Kennedyville, MD 21645.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification _____

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Margaret Q. Fallaw, Survey Consultant		
	The County Commissioners of Kent County		
organization	The Historical Society of Kent County	date	Sept. 18, 1985
	The Court House		778-4600
street & number	Church Alley	telephone	778-3499
city or town	Chestertown	state	Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

In the fifth bay from the front, up two steps, is a secondary, or service, entry to the store sales room, evidently intended for deliveries made to the side and for access by family members, who lived in the house just to the north. Door trim is plain, as it is throughout the building. The door has one large light over one panel. Adjacent to the west is a door to the cellar stair. In the most westerly, 8th bay, is a replacement five-panel door. It leads to what was formerly an insulated ice storage area; outside this door was a loading platform of concrete blocks and concrete. The original door was an insulated metal door.

There are also entries into the front gable-end vestibule of the recreation building and into its rear wing. The recreation building measures ca. 40' wide by 54' deep, the same depth as the store.

The main store entry is part of a typical gable-end storefront of the period. It used the large expanses of glass that improved glass technology had made possible by the second quarter of the twentieth century. It was in a sense a culmination of the three-bay storefront progression seen in earlier stages at the ca. 1870 Locust Grove Store (K-567), where the side bays are quite large 6-light windows, and at the somewhat later Georgetown store (K-285) and a Galena store (K-576), where bay windows with ever-larger glass areas are used to each side of the entry.

The recessed central door has one large light; above it is a short one-light transom with stippled obscure glass. An aluminum screen-storm door is in place. The larger window of the two on each side of the door is flush with the gable-end wall and in the same plane. It measures about 7' wide by 5' high. Separated from it by only a metal corner is a ca. 4'-6" wide by 5' high window that angles in toward the door. Above the main clear windows and separated from them by a heavy bar or muntin is stippled, obscure glass; there are two such lights over the larger, main window and a single light over the window angled toward the door. The windows and entry are tied together visually by 4-1/2" plain trim with a drip that is over both large window units and the recessed entry. Weatherboard covers the remaining area of the facade.

The 3-bay shed-roofed facade porch extends the full width of the front gable end. The rafters are exposed. As with the main-roof overhang, the roof decking is beaded tongue-and-groove board. The concrete floor is one step above ground level. Old anchors in the concrete indicate that the porch may originally have been two-bay and with round metal supports. The entry door is two steps higher than the concrete porch floor. Within the entry-door recess there is poured concrete, with a wooden step up to it from the porch floor.

The store building is clad with horizontal, lapped weatherboard with ca. 6-7" exposure. There are double corner boards. The main walls of the recreation building are of concrete block to which a sort of sprayed-on stucco-like coating has been applied; the gables are frame. The recreation building's addition has lower walls of concrete block and upper walls of frame with weatherboard.

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A small chimney of brick, with a hood, is outside the main section wall on the south side between the second and third bays. Very likely it is for a furnace.

The roof material of the main store building is probably standing-seam metal; it is difficult to see because of the low pitch and the widely-overhanging eaves. The foundation is bevel-edged concrete block.

The treatment of the ca. 4' eaves gives the building its resort-like character. They are supported by a pair of triangulated brackets at each bay division; the sides have seven pairs and the ends four. The horizontal upper arms are of 4" x 4" material, with the outer end finished in a pyramidal shape. These ends protrude beyond the heavy beam they support near the eave outer edge that carries the eave rafters, or look-outs. The long vertical legs on the wall are ca. 40" tall and are constructed of 2" x 4" material. The outer lower edges are beveled. The triangulating piece is ca. 3" x 4". The eave rafters appear to be of 2" x 4" material and are exposed. The underside of the roof deck is finished with narrow, double, beaded tongue-and-groove boards. These exposed structural details owe much to the earlier Craftsman buildings and the popularized bungalows that were fashionable in the 1920s. The eaves' roof is covered with simulated Spanish tile, executed in metal sheets. At each corner above the hip rafters is a large tile-like cap with bulbous end. The "tiles" are brown, apparently painted. The same roofing material is used on the shed-roofed facade porch.

The interior is one large open space, with only the old ice room partitioned off in the northwest corner and the enclosed cellar stair to the east of it. There formerly may have been a small store room in this vicinity as well. A central front-to-rear row of four metal columns supports a summer beam. A lunch counter with stools runs from side to side near the rear of the room; the kitchen is behind it. Formerly in the vicinity of the present lunch counter there were booths and a juke box. Lattice-work two-thirds of the distance to the rear of the building once divided the grocery section from the eating area. The store also had a meat counter, doing a big meat business. Large double doors in the south wall originally led to the recreation building, two steps lower. The opening has been partially closed and a small single door installed. From inside the recreation building it can be seen that that structure is three-sided, utilizing the store wall for the fourth. The recreation room is mostly open; there are several small rooms at the rear.

The store floor is of resilient tile on wood, said to be hardwood. Decorative plywood 4' x 8' panels now cover the walls. The walls were said to have been a soft wall board originally. A grid system with lighting panels and 2'x4' drop-in panels has been installed on the ceiling, which was originally of pressed metal. The store is furnished with display cases and shelving.

The site is level, slightly higher than the public road. The store is set back from the road ca. 60 feet. The area between the store and the road is
(continued)

tarred-and-chipped, for parking and for service at the island gas pumps. A wide gravel drive-parking area extends along the store's north side, adjoining that of the dwelling to the north, in which the original owner's family lived and in which his son and his family now live.

To the rear of the store there is a grassy yard, with a large tree in the center, near a partially dismantled garage. There are some ornamental plantings. Running almost entirely across the rear of the lot is a now-unused fenced garden area, whose sides and top are covered with wire mesh. This seems to date from the period when much produce was raised on-site for sale in the store.

Views from the site: to the south on the same side of the road the vacant, deteriorated Mitchell Home Farm (K-145) house can be seen and its farm buildings across the road to the east from it. To the west the view is largely obscured by the garden structure and the wild growth now inside it. To the east there are cultivated fields across the road, with trees in the distance. To the north is the house built by the original store owner at the time the store was built; it is now largely screened by a board fence and dense plantings. Beyond to the north are the houses and grounds of Kentmore Park dwellings.

The 1920s was a period of agricultural depression in Kent County, as elsewhere, and farm owners sought new ways to make their lands profitable. Concurrent were the rise of urban prosperity, paid vacations, improved roads, and increasingly widespread ownership of the automobile, all of which contributed to the ultimate establishment of Kentmore Park. Since the late nineteenth century several Kent County waterfront resort areas had prospered (most notably Betterton and Tolchester), but their success was tied to the steamboats that sailed regularly from Baltimore and Philadelphia and, to a lesser extent, to the trains to Kent County from Philadelphia and Wilmington. Essentially without transportation after they arrived, most of the resorts' clientele simply rented lodgings in hotels or boarding houses and used the public beaches and other recreational facilities. Very few urbanites had second homes in Kent County, but shrewd owners of waterfront property recognized the appeal of the waterfront to middle-class city dwellers and devised ways to make it both affordable and appealing.

Kentmore Park seems to have been Kent County's first planned waterfront community, similar to similar post-World War I communities that had been successful elsewhere. A large tract of land would be subdivided into small lots, roads built, cottage plans made available with construction and financing arranged, and shoreline facilities built. These were not to be rude cabins to be built in an uncontrolled manner. Though the developers were Roy Mitchell and Miller-Nelson, Inc. of Baltimore (who had already developed one planned waterfront community in Cecil County at Hack's Point), most purchasers of Kentmore Park property were from Wilmington and Philadelphia; they came by car. The attached copy of a Kentmore Park sales prospectus, unfortunately without a date, indicates the selling points: affordability, ownership in preference to renting, privacy, easy terms, second home ownership as an investment, sense of community.

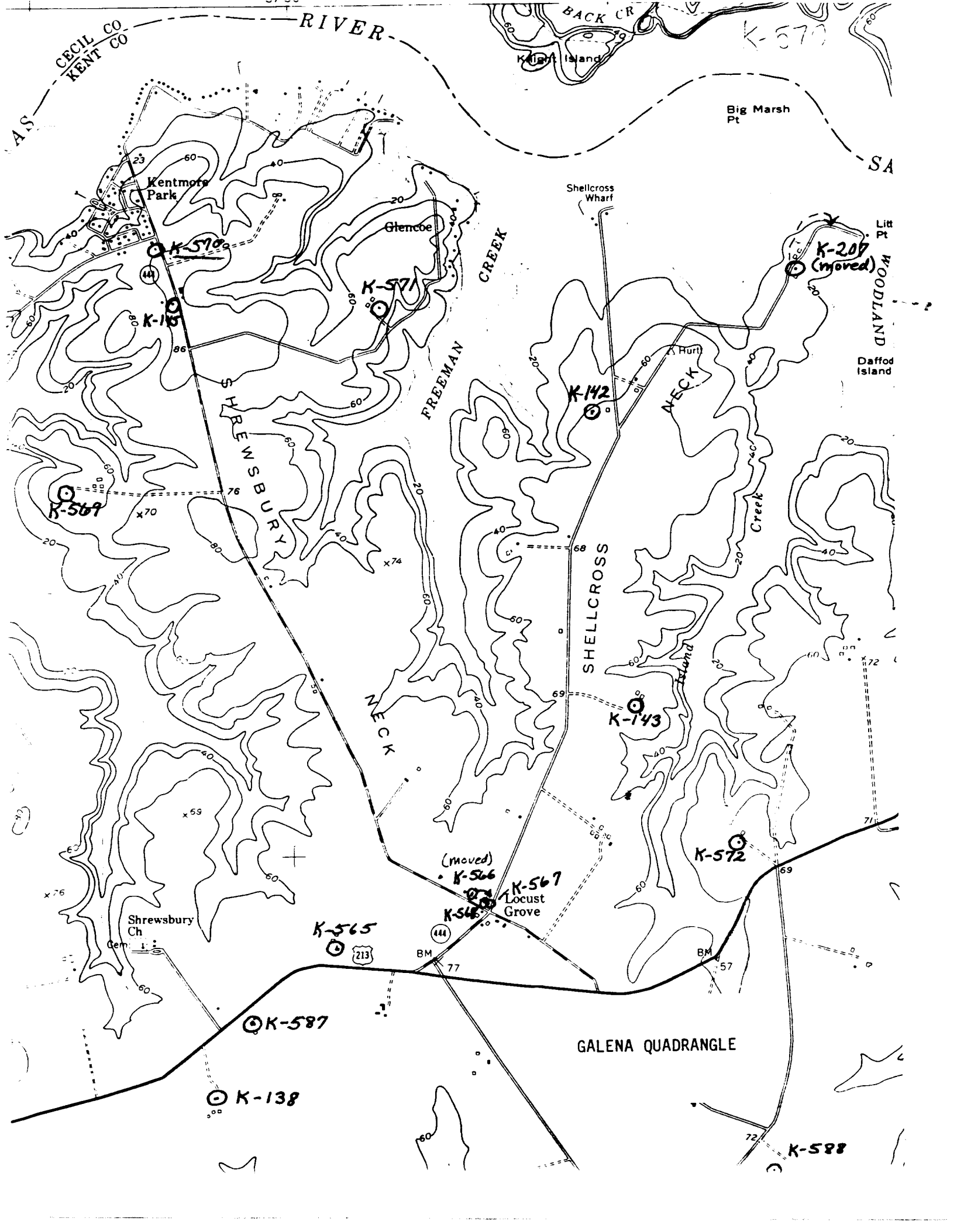
The brochure also shows the architectural style of the early cottages (called bungalows by the developers). All one-storey and basically simple small frame structures, they had nevertheless had details related to the Craftsman movement and the bungalow boom throughout the country during this period. They were what people thought a vacation cottage should look like. The sales office (possibly the first building built in Kentmore Park and shown on the first page of the brochure) still stands, largely unchanged, several hundred feet north of the store at Turner Point Road. It is representative of the early building style of Kentmore Park.

The plats in the Kent County land records reveal the scale of the intended community. The plat for the first section (April 1929) shows 177 lots, in the section west and northwest of Route 444. The size of most lots seems to have been about 50' x 100'. Although the brochure is undated (but is probably quite early), it states that these lots sold for \$50-600, with the average price being about \$200 to \$400. Plat 2 (also April 1929) shows lots numbered 300 to 346, to the southwest of the first section. Later plats use numbers 400-429. All numbers do not seem to be accounted for. Although undoubtedly hit hard by the Crash and the ensuing Depression, sales continued through the 1930s in Kentmore Park, and other sections were opened for sale
(continued)

during that period as well. Some of the later plats show not only small lots but also larger ones. (All in RAS 3/193-196)

Kentmore Park did not become as densely occupied as the plats might indicate. Numerous purchasers seem to have purchased more than one lot but erected only one dwelling, and development proceeded slowly. Over the years many of the original cottages have been added to and become more than weekend or summer dwellings. There are a number of year-round occupants, some of them in houses built for year-round occupancy, some retiring to what previously had been their vacation homes. However, the population of Kentmore Park still swells during the summer and on spring and fall weekends. There has been some quite recent construction.

Roy C. Mitchell, one of the developers, realized that a Kentmore Park store could supply the community's residents with necessities and be a sort of local gathering place as well. Before he built the present store, he operated a store near his farmhouse (K-145) to the south and then a second one somewhat to the north of it, closer to the present store's site. The store evidently prospered, at one time having five full-time employees, apparently because it provided excellent customer service. There was a full meat market, and ice was brought from the Chestertown ice plant and delivered to customers, even to their boats. Gas was sold, and there was a custom delivery service. Produce for sale was grown in the large rear garden. About 1963 the recreation building was added to the side of the store. It was intended to be a community center and especially for the use of the young people, quite numerous at the time though now diminished in numbers. The building is now used for storage. The longtime Kentmore Park Improvement Association still exists, providing a sense of community and maintaining the community beaches and piers.





K-570

Kentmore Park Store

Rt. 444, near Locust Grove

M. Q. Fallaw - 9/18/85

View to southwest

16570-23



K-570

Kentmore Park Store

Rt. 444, near Locust Grove

M. Q. Fallaw - 9/18/85

View to southeast

1c570-25